

Week of February 10, 2003: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Alcohol, Drugs and OTC Medications

Openers/Facts:

- Nearly 2,000 crashes a year in Maine result from a driver being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. About 50 people die and 1,500 more are injured each year.
- In Maine, the percentage of alcohol related fatal crashes is highest for 21-24 year olds.
- Nearly 1,000 teenagers (16-19 year olds) were involved in alcohol or drug related crashes in Maine in the last 5 years. These crashes resulted in 26 fatalities and over 900 injuries.
- Nearly half of Maine's alcohol and drug related crashes and resulting fatalities occurred between 9PM and 3AM.
- Although few people are on the road between Midnight and 3AM, that is the deadliest time for alcohol and drug related crashes. One fourth of Maine's alcohol/drug related crashes occur during these three hours, and one third of the fatalities.
- In Maine, from 1999 through 2001:
 - 28% of the traffic fatalities occurred in crashes where at least one driver (or involved pedestrian or bicyclist) was under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - Almost two thirds of alcohol/drug related crashes occur during hours of darkness.
 - 57% of the fatal alcohol-related crashes occur on weekends (5pm Friday through midnight Sunday).
 - About 50% of the fatal weekend crashes are alcohol-related.
 - About one out of six pedestrians over 16 years old killed in traffic crashes were intoxicated.

Monday:

Opener:

We all know drinking and driving don't mix. But there's one time of day that seems to be particularly deadly. We'll have more right after the break.

Flash Facts:

This week, Maine DOT's Flash Facts will remind us how alcohol, drugs and over-the-counter medications can affect your driving.

We all know that alcohol increases your chance of a fatal crash. But what time of the day or night do these fatalities most commonly occur? Fully one-third of all alcohol-related fatalities happen between midnight and 3 am. - even though that's also when the fewest people are on the road. This is clear proof of how alcohol impairs your ability to drive.

*Prepared by:
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Other facts:

- Statistics show that alcohol can slow reaction time by as much as 25%.
- 28% of all fatalities are attributed to drugs or alcohol.
- One in six adult pedestrians killed in traffic crashes are intoxicated.

Be a Road Model. Don't drink and drive.

Wednesday**Opener:**

Even national TV commercials are talking about the benefits of being a designated driver. What's the benefit in Maine? We'll tell you after the break.

Flash Facts:

This week, Maine DOT's Flash Facts are reminding us how alcohol, drugs and over-the-counter medications can affect your driving.

Designated drivers are becoming more common here in Maine. And there's good reason for it. Maine has one of the toughest drunk driving laws in the country. Here's what you can expect these days from an OUI conviction:

- If you're over 21 and have a blood alcohol content of .08% or higher, you lose your license for at least 90 days and pay a stiff fine. This has consequences for your family as well as yourself.
- If you're UNDER 21 and are convicted of ANY blood alcohol content, you lose your license for at least a year and pay a stiff fine.
- That's because young drivers - 16-year olds - have the highest percentage of fatal crashes - more than twice any other age group.

Be a Road Model. Don't drink and drive.

Friday**Opener:**

Just because a drug is non-prescription doesn't mean it's not powerful. Certain drugs can affect your driving as much as alcohol. More after the break.

Flash Facts:

This week, Maine DOT's Flash Facts are reminding us how alcohol, drugs and over-the-counter medications can affect your driving.

These days, prescription drugs come with a long list of warnings. But what about non-prescription drugs? Can they really affect your driving? The answer is yes. A number of over the counter drugs can cause side effects that affect your ability to react to the unexpected - or even stay awake.

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What are the worst offenders?

- Antihistamines can be very sedating. These are common in cold medications and allergy pills. Ask your pharmacist or doctor for information.
- The time to be most cautious is with any medication you're taking for the first time - prescription or not. Don't take any new drug before a road trip.
- Finally, don't mix medications with alcohol. It's just asking for trouble.

Be a Road Model - drive responsibly!